



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

May 25, 2012

2012-R-0228

SLAUGHTERHOUSES

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You asked (1) if there was a law change that allows more horse slaughterhouses, (2) how someone would go about opening a slaughterhouse in Connecticut, and (3) if other states ban slaughtering horses.

RECENT LAW CHANGE ALLOWING FOR SLAUGHTERHOUSES

On November 18, 2011, President Obama signed the 2012 spending bill (known as the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (H.R. 2112)). The bill allocated funding for several federal agencies. Part of the bill lifted a 2006 provision that prohibited the use of federal funds to inspect horses destined for food, which effectively prohibited the domestic slaughter of horses.

Although there are no horse slaughterhouses in the United States, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has said, if this changes, it will conduct appropriate inspections to ensure humane handling and slaughter. The 2012 spending bill did not allocate any money to the USDA for these purposes, so any inspections would be done within its present budget.

OPENING A SLAUGHTERHOUSE IN CONNECTICUT

According to the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAG), someone who wants to open a slaughterhouse in Connecticut to sell red meat has to locate a town willing to accept the facility. The person would likely need to obtain certain local permits (e.g., zoning, building, and

sewer and sanitation). Thus, contacting and working with a town is the first step. If the proposed location does not tie into municipal sewers, the town will likely refer the person to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for discharge regulation.

After securing town approval, the person would have to contact the USDA's Albany office (518-452-6870), which serves Connecticut. The facility would need to follow federal registering, inspection, and safety requirements. Without the USDA's stamp of inspection, a farmer cannot legally sell red meat at retail or wholesale.

There are currently four USDA-inspected slaughterhouses in Connecticut and about six custom slaughterhouses, according to DoAG. Custom slaughterhouses, where an owner slaughters animals for his or her own consumption, are exempt from the USDA inspection process, but they must still register with USDA.

Additional information on slaughterhouses is available in DoAG's Farmer's Guide to Processing and Selling Meat or Poultry in Connecticut, available at http://www.ct.gov/doag/lib/doag/marketing_files/farmers_guide_to_processing_and_selling_meat_and_poultry_in_ct.pdf.

STATES THAT BAN THE SLAUGHTERING OF HORSES

Five states (California, Illinois, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas) have laws related to horse slaughtering, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

California and Illinois prohibit the slaughtering of horses for human consumption (Cal. Penal Code § 14-598c and 225 Ill. Comp. Stat. 635/1-1.5).

Mississippi defines the phrase "food unfit for human consumption" to include horse meat (Miss. Code Ann. § 75-33-3).

Oklahoma and Texas prohibit the sale of horse meat for human consumption (Okla. Stat. tit. 63, § 1-1136 and Tex. Agric. Code Ann. § 149.002).

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